

Editorial

Restoring Continuity, Renewing Purpose: Completing the Back Volumes Project

With this final installment of the Back Volumes Project, we close an undertaking that has been both restorative and forward-looking. What began as an effort to repair a gap in the journal's publication history quickly became a deeper engagement with the identity and evolution of *Individual Differences Research*. Reconstructing these volumes meant revisiting unpublished manuscripts collected over the past few years and integrating works from the journals we acquired into a coherent narrative. In doing so, the project honored the varied origins of these archival contributions while situating them meaningfully within the broader trajectory of *IDR*.

The process felt, at times, like assembling a long-interrupted conversation. Though the 'Archival Featured Articles' were not originally published in *IDR*, they reflected constructs and concerns that have animated individual differences scholarship for decades. Bringing them into the journal's lineage required careful selection, thematic framing, and an appreciation for the contexts in which they were first created. As Allport (1937) reminded us, the study of personality always occurs within context, and assembling these volumes required attention not only to empirical content but also to the scholarly histories that shaped it.

Across the reconstructed back volumes, several themes consistently reappeared. Early issues revisited longstanding distinctions between adaptive and maladaptive worry, linking previous theory with contemporary research on sleep disturbance and emotional vulnerability. Others foregrounded metacognitive beliefs, attributional processes, and the regulatory functions of the self, echoing ideas rooted in ego psychology (Hartmann, 1958) and the conceptual frameworks outlined by Rapaport (1951).

Several volumes highlighted the structure and clarity of the self, returning to questions shaped in part by Erikson's (1950) developmental view of identity. These themes found renewed expression in contemporary work on self-concept clarity and identity coherence (Lodi-Smith and Roberts, 2017). Across multiple studies, constructs such as ego strength and ego resiliency continued to demonstrate conceptual continuity with earlier formulations, including the flexible adaptive functioning described by Block and Kremen (1996).

A distinctive contribution of the Back Volumes Project seems to have been its sustained attention to nighttime experience. Research on absorption, dysphoric dreaming, sleep disturbance, and nocturnal experiences reinforced the insight, articulated by Hall and Nordby (1972) and continually clarified by others (Domhoff, 2017; Schredl, 2017), that dreaming reflects the same

psychological processes that organize waking life. These new and archival studies underscored a broader theme in individual differences research: that personality and self-organization express themselves across states, experiences, and symbolic forms.

The new contributions included throughout the Back Volumes were essential to renewing the journal's purpose. They refined and offered validation of measures of ego strength and creativity, clarified distinctions between normal and pathological worry, and extended research on imaginative engagement and immersive cognitive style. These works demonstrated how classical constructs continue to evolve through contemporary theory and empirical methods while remaining anchored in earlier foundational ideas.

The reconstructed volumes reflect broader trends in psychological science that emphasize clarity of constructs, rigorous measurement, and transparency in practice (Clark and Watson, 2019; Flake and Fried, 2020). In addition to examining psychometric concerns, new contributions integrated experimental, narrative, and embodied approaches with established self-report traditions. Taken together, these articles align well with integrative perspectives such as McAdams and Pals' (2006) framework, which conceptualizes individuality as the interplay of dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and self-defining narratives.

Completing the Back Volumes Project restores continuity to the journal's archival record, but its deeper achievement lies in renewing its purpose. This work affirms that *Individual Differences Research* remains committed to studying meaningful variation in how individuals think, feel, imagine, regulate, relate, and adapt. That commitment encompasses both the classic conceptual roots represented in our acquired archival materials and the emerging directions represented in our contemporary contributions.

This closing back volume, less thematically constrained than those before it, serves as a bridge between reconstruction and the journal's future. It reflects *IDR*'s longstanding commitments to conceptual clarity, methodological rigor, and sensitivity to the complexity of psychological life, while opening space for new voices and new directions. With the Back Volumes complete, the journal moves forward grounded in the history of the study of individual differences, renewed in its mission, and committed, as always, to illuminating the distinctive contours of the human mind.

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